

Minutes of the meeting of the
Commission of Fine Arts held March 22d and
23d, 1912 .

The sixth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1912 was held in its office in the Lemon Building, Washington, D. C., on Friday and Saturday, March 22d and 23d, 1912. The following members were present:

Mr. Burnham, the Chairman;

Mr. Olmsted;

Mr. Hastings;

Mr. French;

Mr. Moore;

also Colonel Spencer Cosby, the Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 10:15 Friday morning and immediately proceeded to the business before it.

1. The minutes of the preceding meeting, held on January 23d and 24th, were presented and approved.

2. The Secretary read a letter from Mr. F. D. Millet, giving the reasons for his absence from the meeting, and also presented the regrets of Mr. Gilbert at his inability to be present.

3. At the meeting held on December 15, 1911, it was suggested that the Secretary take up informally with the Librarian of Congress and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution the practicability of the purchase by the Government of a duplicate of the model of ancient Rome, executed by the French architect, P. Bigot. Colonel Cosby now presented to the Commission letters from Mr. Putnam and Mr. Walcott, in which these gentlemen, while recognizing the desirability of the Government's ac-



quiring such a model, stated that the lack of funds prevented their respective institutions from making the purchase. The Commission discussed the matter but felt that, while every effort should be made to have the Government acquire a replica of the model, the present is not a favorable time to press the matter.

4. The Secretary next read a letter from the President, dated February 2, 1912, requesting the Commission of Fine Arts to advise the Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds in regard to the improvement of any of the grounds in the City of Washington under his charge, whenever such advice is asked for by the Officer. The request was noted, and the letter ordered placed on file.

5. Colonel Cosby brought up the subject of the annual report of the Commission for the fiscal year 1912, and requested suggestions from the members in regard to the publication of anything that would tend to strengthen the position of the Commission or add to the value of the report. The Chairman requested the members to give this matter their individual attention, and after a study of the Commission's first report to forward their suggestions to the Secretary.

6. By letter dated March 21, 1912, the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia submitted for the criticism and approval of the Commission a plaster sketch model and a photograph of a second uncompleted sketch model of the two designs of buffaloes which are to be erected in bronze upon the newels of the bridge to be constructed across Rock Creek at Q street, northwest. The designs were approved.

Mr. Glenn Brown, the architect of the proposed bridge, later appeared before the Commission by invitation and presented plans showing in detail the architecture of the bridge, and a photograph of a model of the bridge with the buffaloes in place.

7. The Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, by letter of March 21, 1912, submitted new plans, designed in the Georgian or Colonial style, for the colored normal school building to be erected on Georgia avenue; former plans for this school, which had been considered by the Commission at its last meeting, were rendered in the Elizabethan style, and the Commission had recommended a restudy of the problem. The style and design shown by the new plans were considered appropriate, and the plans were approved. (See Exhibit A)

The Engineer Commissioner and the Municipal Architect appeared later during the session of the Commission and conferred with the members regarding the plans.

8. The Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds submitted for the consideration of the Commission a report, with accompanying plan, of the landscape architect under his Office upon the proposed treatment of the parking around the Sheridan statue. The Chair appointed Messrs. Olmsted and French a committee with power to report upon this matter. After an inspection of the site the committee approved the report and plan of the landscape architect, but expressed some doubts as to whether it will be practicable to maintain the turf,--that is to say, whether there will not be a tendency to walk up to the statue, which will make paths necessary. If this should prove to be the case, the committee recommended that concrete walks be constructed on the lines of the existing gravel paths on the axis of Massachusetts avenue and on the circle around the statue, but that the transverse paths be omitted.

9. The Secretary presented a letter from Lieut. Col. Langfitt, Senior member of the Board of Engineers upon the Reclamation and Development of the Anacostia River



and Flats, submitting a tentative plan for the reclamation of the area referred to, with request that the Commission give the Board the benefit of its experience in such matters by advising in regard to the project. Upon motion made and seconded the Commission approved the plan, but referred the matter for further consideration and report to a committee, appointed by the Chair, consisting of Mr. Olmsted and Mr. Moore.

10. The Secretary next presented a letter from the Senate Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, transmitting copy of Senate Bill 5494, 62d Congress, "to provide a site for the erection of a building to be known as the George Washington Memorial Building...", and requesting that the bill be examined and a report made thereon, if desirable, for the use of that Committee. The site proposed in the Bill being the one that had been previously recommended for the proposed new Armory for the National Guard of the District of Columbia, the plans of which had also been referred to the Commission, the two projects were considered jointly. As the location of these two buildings brought up the question as to the policy to be adopted in the location of future buildings on the Mall, the Commission felt that close study should be given to the matter before making the report. The preparation of the reports was referred to Mr. Moore, copies thereof to be transmitted by him to the other members for approval before the official reports are signed and sent.

Mr. Tracy, of the firm of Tracy, Swartwout and Litchfield, architects for the proposed Armory, appeared before the Commission and explained the reasons for using the style of architecture shown on the plans presented to Congress. He stated that these plans are preliminary only, and that much farther study would be given to them.

11. Compliance with the request of the Lincoln Memorial Commission that the Commission of Fine Arts look over the plans for a Lincoln Memorial submitted by



Mr. Henry Bacon and Mr. John Russell Pope, and give a brief criticism of each design submitted, occupied most of the time of the Commission for the remainder of the session. The Commission left the office at 12:15 for an inspection of the designs at the National Museum, and, after taking lunch, returned to the office for the preparation of its report. The report was not finished on Friday, but, on reconvening at the office on Saturday morning, it was read and approved, and transmitted to the Lincoln Memorial Commission. (See Exhibit B.)

12. Lt. Col. W. V. Judson, Engineer Commissioner of the District, and Municipal Architect Snowden Ashford appeared before the Commission at 11 A. M., Saturday. Besides conferring upon the designs for the proposed colored normal school before the Commission, and the type of school architecture for the District, Colonel Judson discussed with the Commissioners the project for the reclamation of the Anacostia River and Flats. The new lamp posts used in the lighting system of the city, and a proposed arrangement of the posts for lighting Pennsylvania avenue were also discussed.

13. After this conference the Commission left the office and proceeded to the fifth floor of the State, War and Navy Department building and inspected the model by F. H. Packer of the monument to be erected by the Government at Guilford C. H., N. C., with the view of considering a modification of the architectural setting. Mr. Packer had been requested by the Secretary of War to confer with Mr. French in regard to this modification.

14. After a short interval for lunch the Commission proceeded to the Sheridan monument in connection with the consideration of the treatment of the parking around the monument. After finishing its inspection, the Commission adjourned at 2 P. M., subject to the call of the Chairman.

APPROVED: *Thomas Hastings* Acting Chairman.

James C. Ostry Secretary.

